My name is Evan Bander, and I am a first year medical student running for Student Overseer. As Student Overseer, I would aim to build upon our school’s existing strengths to create a stimulating and growth-oriented atmosphere.

There are a number of areas where simple and effective changes could improve our learning environment and sense of community. This past month, we heard that our learning environment was compromised by disrespectful behavior between medical students. In light of these recent events, it has come to my attention that WCMC lacks the appropriate structure to deal with student issues in a safe way. Rather than escalating issues directly to Deans, WCMC should create the position of Ombudsman, an intermediary trained to deal with internal conflicts in an impartial and confidential way, and a dedicated Office of Diversity Affairs. Both of these offices exist at most peer institutions and are essential in establishing and maintaining a cohesive, safe, and respectful environment for all students.

In my first year at WCMC, I have been surprised by the lack of integration, cooperation, and communication between MD and PhD students. I believe that better integration between our groups will create a more cohesive and enjoyable experience for both student populations. A first step in improving our integration can be made by combining our resources. Many MSEC-funded clubs need not be limited to MD students and some parties planned by MSEC and GSEC need not be separate (Halloween, Thanksgiving, etc). Academically, journal clubs that exist in both curriculums are also an opportunity to bring MD and PhD students together. By pooling resources, we can save money, fund more clubs and/or travel expenses to conferences, and expand the number of people with diverse backgrounds and interests that we interact with on a daily basis. By creating a combined student body listserv and MSEC/GSEC representatives that coordinate these activities between the groups, we can take the first steps to create a more integrated student body.

I also believe that we can work with the new Office of Faculty Development to make sure they develop not just faculty grant writing skills, but also lecturing and mentoring skills.

The lack of dual degree opportunities has been a weakness at Weill Cornell due to its separate undergraduate campus. However, Weill Cornell has a great opportunity to offer its students combined degrees with an MPH and eventually a Cornell/Technion Master of Applied Science degree. This can be accomplished by expanding the existing institutional collaborations with CUNY’s Hunter College to offer our students an MPH and by working with the leaders of the new Cornell-Technion Innovation Institute that will be on Roosevelt Island to establish a degree opportunity for the many students with entrepreneurial aspirations. At this moment, Weill Cornell can turn a weakness into strength, an opportunity that I don’t think we can afford to miss.

As Overseer, I would also continue to bring attention to the important issues of student space, financial aid, improved WCMC-Qatar integration, student involvement in curriculum reform, and support for child care that have been established by the current Student Overseer.

I believe I am prepared to take on the ideas that I have set out in this document because at WCMC, I have attended every MSEC meeting, have co-organized Medical Student Research Day, been an MSEC representative to the Executive Faculty Council (a committee that includes all Department Chairs and Dean Glimcher), taken an active role in curriculum reform by participating in pilot curricular programs such as ITEACH and attending curriculum reform meetings, and participated in a wide number of clubs at WCMC. As an undergraduate at Cornell University, I worked with Deans and Vice Provosts to help fund and run a student magazine (TRP - The Research Paper) and plan events for an annual Sick in America Conference. My time at Cornell University has also given me a greater understanding of our institutional structure, and the relationship between Weill Cornell and the Ithaca campus. It is clear to me that a successful Student Overseer will not just be a student who is aware of the issues, but one who is also willing to think of unique and feasible solutions to those issues. I hope that you will support my candidacy so that I may work to enhance our environment, opportunities, and experience at Weill Cornell.